

AFW FOTG Executive Committee Meeting # 11
May 10, 2001
Mount Vernon, WA

Note: These draft minutes are gross representations of the meeting and no party is binding to any accountability of the minutes.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Tim Thompson brought the meeting to order and introductions were made.

Last meeting's minutes were corrected: Ken Berg's name was misspelled. Jim Muck requested further additions; the minutes can not be posted on the web site until we have confirmation that no other changes need to be made. Attendees are encouraged to look over the minutes of the last FOTG EC meeting for mistakes and report them to Paula or Hibba.

2. Review of Section 7 Consultation Process

Steve Landino gave a brief overview of the Section 7 consultation process after which he accepted questions on the Section 7 Q&A handout. Section 7 requires federal agencies to consult on federal actions that affect listed species. An action agency is defined as those agencies that are funding the consultation. Federal funding does not fund 100% of the Section 7 process. Thompson said that funding is a very high priority, and that we should understand how the system works. Dick Wallace mentioned that the real work on funding will occur when the AWC guidelines document is complete. If any changes are made to a program after a consultation then there will be a re-consultation process. Paul LaCroix informed the table that the Ag community is participating assuming that funding will be fully available; he also mentioned that funding information, such as this, should be stated in Section 7 Q&A document. Thompson suggested that the group put together a funding sub-group to discuss funding concerns and to secure potential funding sources. Priority areas are defined as target areas that are chosen by local workgroups.

3. Progress Report from Integrated Technical Team/Review of AWC Document

LaCroix and Sara Hemphill provided a progress report on what the ITT has produced to date in the Agricultural Watercourse (AWC) Maintenance Policy Guidelines for NW Washington. LaCroix provided information on what has been completed and a timeline of what is expected to be done. Chapters with minimal changes were not discussed.

Carolyn Kelly presented an outline of Chapter 2, "Process for AWC Maintenance Farm and Drainage District Planning." The guidelines encompass concerns from different sides: land owners who might believe that these are unnecessary practices and agencies who prefer consistency. Chapter 2 provides a nine-step planning process to guide districts in conservation planning, where the landowner and the district work together. It also provides for consistency, monitoring and feedback, and demonstrates diligence. Kelly emphasized that Conservation Districts are non-regulatory; landowners are their own regulators. A sample certificate of participation is provided for landowners at the end of chapter two. Kelly gave a brief description of what a Conservation District is.

John Mankowski asked, since what is being developed is not a regulatory process, is it true that regulatory agencies may not participate? Carolyn answered that this is a gray area. A short discussion of funding concerns arose, followed by questions about meeting state and federal standards through farm plans.

George Boggs presented a review of Chapter 6, "Monitoring, Adaptive Management, and Oversight." Chapter 6 has recently been revised and is a separate handout from the AWC guideline document. The revised chapter will be placed into the AWC guideline document. Boggs discussed adaptive management and monitoring concepts and applied them to the AWC maintenance planning process. Because the complexity of the ecosystem is enormous, the effectiveness of the program and the methodologies involved will be examined. Compliance issues were discussed. Non-compliance due to factors beyond a farmer's control will need to be included in the "NW WA Watercourse Monitoring/Adaptive Management" flowchart.

Jim Hazen asked about growers who are in compliance and do not want to enroll in any sort of plan. Will they get credit for this process? A discussion of funding issues ensued. Steve Meyer reminded everyone that agencies cannot lobby; landowners can make an effective difference by talking to those who represent them in the legislature.

Jim Muck explained the ITT Practice Review chart. This chart includes the review status of all practices that will be included in the AWC guideline document. Practices that are not numbered on the handout are ones that will be written by the ITT.

Thompson suggested a rollout strategy to discuss EC consultation at the next meeting.

Thompson recommended that the EC review the AWC guidelines document and send their comments to Lynn Briscoe by May 25th (lbriscoe@agr.wa.gov).

Action Item:

- **Tim Thompson** will provide a rollout strategy at the next Executive Committee meeting.
- **The Executive Committee** should review the AWC guidelines document and send comments to **Lynn Briscoe (lbriscoe@agr.wa.gov)**.

4. V-Ditch Issue

Wallace introduced the V-Ditch issue as an important long-standing northwest agricultural practice. He also mentioned that two big reports are to emerge soon: 1.

1 an NRCS evaluation that offers alternative practices to V-Ditches, and 2. A
2 Department of Ecology report produced out of Padilla Bay. These are important to
3 consider in the AFW discussion of V-Ditches. Wallace thanked the ITT for all their
4 hard work on this issue and encouraged them to bring up any policy questions to the
5 EC. A discussion of the value and history of V-Ditches developed. Thompson
6 requested that the ITT supply options to consider regarding V-Ditches at the next EC
7 meeting. A discussion of best management practices concerning V-Ditches followed.
8 Thompson expressed the need to educate the EC about V-Ditches at the next EC
9 meeting (tentatively scheduled for June 29).

10
11 Frank Easter gave a brief overview of what the NRCS evaluation report for V-Ditches
12 looks like. The evaluation report is being put together by scientists, engineers, and
13 members of the ITT. The ITT is expecting the report to include evaluation of: soils –
14 infiltration (surfaces), permeability (sub-surface), organic matter, composition;
15 drainage needs – by crop/soil; tillage and cropping systems; hydrology; and
16 findings/recommendations. Frank said that NRCS is meeting with Kate Vandemoer,
17 hydrologist with NMFS, on May 24th to discuss hydrologic issues for the report.

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19 **Action Items:**

- 20 ■ **The ITT** should supply options to consider for V-ditches at the next EC meeting.
- 21 ■ **Frank Easter** will meet with NMFS staff to discuss hydrologic issues for the AWC
22 document.
- 23 ■ **Tim Thompson** expressed the need to educate the EC about v-ditches at the next EC
24 meeting.

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26 **5. Function-Based Riparian Issues**

27 Easter introduced the ITT proposed draft AWC Classification Table. Easter reminded
28 everyone that these practices have not been finalized. The criteria established is
29 general; it does not apply to every situation. The table tries to match up the
30 classification of channel types with functional tools (practices) to get to protection
31 objectives.

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33 Dale Bambrick gave a presentation on the State/Federal buffer table. The State and
34 Federal caucuses had been requested to come up with a product by the EC. Bambrick
35 passed out a few copies of the most recent draft (4-1-01). He then went through the
36 State/Fed proposed function/channel classification table. Bambrick offered to
37 provide the scientific basis for the chart to anyone who is interested. The goal is to
38 offer a level of protection that provides an incidental take statement. Bambrick
39 reminded the EC that this is a coarse scale classification table and there's more work
40 to be done. The goal is to meet state and federal water quality standards. Discussion
41 of site specific situations arose. Thompson would like the ITT and EC to build on the
42 work that has been established, and to come up with a result that both will agree to.

43
44 Bambrick informed the group that the numbers on the table are based on literature
45 reviews and other references. These numbers are within the ballpark of an advisable
46 range, not the exact numbers to be used in every situation. He stated there is

flexibility to negotiate elements when looking at specific situations. The channel types on this table do not mesh up with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR's). A discussion of definitions, standards, and practices resulted. Mike Ashley asked if the Ag caucus could review the science involved in this process. Bambrick emphasized that those who are trying to achieve compliance with CWA using only buffer widths will have to conform to set widths. Hemphill noted there are other issues that need. Those who achieve CWA compliance using various techniques have more leeway in the width of buffers.

Steve Landino would like the EC to recognize that "one size fits all" is unrealistic since there are so many different types of situations. He would like the EC to acknowledge that each site has specific factors and it would be difficult to come up with a rule for each situation.

Action item:

- **Dale Bambrick** will send Paula Smith the 4-1-01 version of the State and Federal buffer table to be e-mailed to everyone.
- The **ITT and the EC** should build on the work that has been established and come up with results that both will agree to.
- The **Ag Caucus** should review the science involved in the AFW process.

6. Status Review of Unfinished Items

Gretchen Borck called an Ag caucus meeting for 20 minutes. When the Ag caucus returned, they requested the EC recognize the ITT's matrix and the hard work the ITT put into its development. The caucus also requested that the ITT, the EC, and the Ag caucus receive all the science references used to develop the State/Fed buffer table, and that a half day be devoted to discussing the science at the next EC meeting. NMFS and WDFW committed to providing the science as soon as possible. The Ag caucus will advise AFW staff two weeks before the tentatively scheduled June meeting as to whether the meeting will take place. They also asked that the next EC meeting be held in Ritzville.

Thompson expressed the need for the EC to provide the ITT with clear guidance and that the ITT needs to inform the EC of their progress, bringing policy questions back to the table. He also suggested that subgroups of 4-5 people should form to tackle specific issues like funding and compliance.

Action item:

- The **Services and State Fish and Wildlife** will provide the Ag caucus, EC, and ITT with the science used to produce the Federal Buffer Table as soon as possible.
- **The EC** should provide the ITT with clear guidance. **The ITT** should bring policy questions to the EC.

7. Next Steps

1 Muck promised the EC that the V-ditch issue would be discussed by the ITT and
2 finalized by the beginning of June. Muck also stated that the two classification tables
3 (ITT's and the State/Fed) are already being combined.
4

5 **Action Item:**

- 6 ■ **The ITT** will have the practices completed by the next EC meeting.
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8 **Meeting Handouts:**

- 9 • Agenda
10 • Draft Meeting Summary for January 11, 2001 FOTG EC meeting
11 • Draft (3-18-01): State Federal Fish Managers Approach for Riparian Buffers
12 Along Agricultural Water Courses in NW WA
13 • AWC Guidelines
14 • AWC document revised Chapter 6: Monitoring, Adaptive Management &
15 Accountability
16 • AWC Classification Table
17 • ITT Practice Review Status Chart (5-1-01)
18 • AFW FOTG Process Q&A: Section 7 Consultation (2-23-01)
19 • Ecology News Release: "Which polluted waterways should Ecology
20 Department clean up this year?"
21 • AWC Maintenance Policy Guidelines for NW WA: Progress Report
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Attendees	Affiliation
Ashley, Mike	Snohomish County
Bambrick, Dale	NMFS
Bartelheimer, Ryan	Snohomish Conservation District
Berg, Ken	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Boggs, George	Whatcom Conservation District
Borck, Gretchen	WAWG
Briscoe, Lynn	WA Department of Agriculture
Brookings, David	Skagit Co. Public Works
Cheney, Chris	Ag Caucus
Deusen, Millard S.	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Doenges, Rich	Skagit County
Easter, Frank	NRCS
Eaton, Tom	Environmental Protection Agency
Faulconer, Lee	Department of Agriculture
George, Steven	Hop Growers
Gordon, Jay	Dairy Fed.
Hazen, Jim	WSHS
Hemphill, Sara	NRC
Jensen, Martha	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Johnson, Linda	WA Farm Bureau
Jones, Gary T.	Attorney for District
Judge, Millie	Snohomish County
KauzLoric, Phil	Department of Ecology
Kelly, Carolyn	Skagit Conservation District
LaCroix, Paul	WWAA
Landino, Steve	NMFS
Mankowski, John	WDFW
Martin, Chal	Skagit Co. Public Works
McGregor, Pat	WACD
Meyer, Steve	WSCC
Morley, Philip	Snohomish County Executive Office
Morris, Betty Sue	WASAC/Clark County
Muck, Jim	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Nelson, Kim E.	Nelson Construction, SAP member
Nelson, Rick	WCA
Pennington, Ryan	Congressman Larsen
Poulsen, Karen	Hay Growers
Reid, Jackie	WSCC
Robinson, Bill	Trout Unlimited
Roozen, John	WA Bulb Co. Inc./ITT Member
Smith, Paula	WSCC
Thompson, Tim	Facilitator
Troutman, Wade	WACD
Turner, Bob	NMFS

Wahbeh, Hibba	WSCC
Wallace, Dick	Department of Ecology
Wasserman, Larry	SSC
Wesen, Lyle R.	ITT Committee
Wood, Dan	Grays Harbor County
Wright, Vim	WSCC
Zimmerman, Jim	WA State Grange

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